

Track and road tested: The BMW M340i xDrive Sedan



By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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I received the keys to a beauty of a beast speed machine recently and straight away I could feel the excitement coursing through my veins. The 'burnt-orange' metallic colour just added to the look and feel of this sedan but get into the cockpit, the excitement levels ramp up a notch or two.



Image by Naresh Maharaj



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So I quickly got thinking back to my time a few months ago when I put this 'speed machine' through its paces at the Kyalami racing circuit. Despite going around the track several times, I just could not get enough of the M340i. I knew that driving the sedan on the KwaZulu-Natal national roads will see me doing in excess of 120kmph, so I made arrangements to track test the vehicle at the Dezzi Racetrack on the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast.

Drive it as if you stole it!

You have to drive this machine as if you stole it. Drive to match your stride. It has all the 'bells and whistles' to attempt you to take it to the limit. Press the start button and the engine immediately roars to life, and after a minute, it relaxes down to a smooth constant growl.

I have a heavy foot and even whilst driving to Dezzi Raceway, I had to lift my foot off the accelerator several times as I had already reached speeds in excess of 120kmph. When you drive it in Sports Plus manual mode, you hear the turbo blips as you change gears, upwards or downwards via the paddle shifters, music to my ears.

M Power at its best

The BMW M340i xDrive Sedan is powered by a newly developed straight six-cylinder petrol engine with 275kW of power. Together, high engine performance, M-specific suspension technology and intelligent four-wheel drive provide for outstanding driving dynamics that are unparalleled in the midsize segment.

The exceptional sporty character is underscored by model-specific design and equipment features. Zero to 100kmph in just 4.4 seconds is really saying something. That's half a second faster than the top-of-the-range model of the previous generation of the BMW 3 Series Sedan.

Acceleration, cornering dynamics, agility, precision, braking – the BMW M340i xDrive Sedan is setting new benchmarks in all areas relevant to driving dynamics. It makes consistent use in particular of the vehicle concept of the BMW 3 Series Sedan, which is oriented towards sporting driving pleasure and comprises a low centre of gravity, optimised weight, well-balanced axle load distribution as well as increased body rigidity and uprated suspension mountings.

Moreover, the suspension technology and aerodynamics are precisely tuned to the new power unit's high-performance characteristics. In addition, the M Sport suspension, variable sports steering, an M Sport differential, the M Sport brake system and 18-inch M light-alloy wheels with mixed tyres are all standard equipment features for the BMW M340i xDrive Sedan.

M Sports Exhaust

Power development and speed increase are accompanied by the characteristic sound of the straight six-cylinder engine, which has gained additional presence thanks to the M Sport exhaust unit. Above all in the Sport and Sport+ modes, which

can be activated via the Driving Experience Control switch, the valve-controlled exhaust system generates a particularly distinctive sound. The sound development that accompanies the engine's dynamic power delivery is also intensively perceptible inside the BMW M340i xDrive Sedan. Combined fuel consumption is 7.5l per 100km. Now if you can afford the car, you are certainly not going to worry about the fuel consumption, suffice to say that if you engage the car in M Sport plus, it's going to eat up the petrol, as we experienced on the track.

Steptronic Gearbox

The BMW M340i xDrive Sedan comes as standard with the 8-speed Steptronic sports transmission of the latest generation, which is characterised, amongst other things, by an optimised hydraulic control system and exceptionally high shifting dynamics. Shift paddles on the steering wheel facilitate manual gear selection at any time.

Inside the car, sports seats with M-specific upholstery in Alcantara leather trim, the anthracite BMW Individual roof liner, the M leather-clad steering wheel with shift paddles and interior trim strips in Aluminium Tetragon provide for an intensive driving pleasure oriented ambience. The digital instrument cluster bears the lettering "M340i". A further exclusive design feature of the BMW M340i xDrive Sedan are the front door sills also boasting the model lettering.

Verdict

Power to the people. Want to get the taste of speeds in excess of the norm. Then the BMW M340i xDrive, built on the iconic 3 series, just maybe the wheels for you. The ride equalling your stride.

The cost is.....just a few rands short of a million. The BMW five-year/100,000km Motorplan comes standard.

ABOUT NARESH MAHARAJ

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